882 in the [216] soli, the n-golo-moso, and with other girl friends
[836] are not merely platonic; indeed, sexual licentiousness is common.

As in everything else, a girl's life is more restricted. For her, the soli is merely a way of being presented to society, as we would say, that is, a means of attracting a prospective husband.

884 Coming-of-age, guardianship, deprivation of civil rights. It is obvious from the above that a Bambara has no way of knowing his age with any certainty. At best, he can estimate it by referring to some important event known to have occurred at about the time of his birth.

Since this is the case, we can see that coming-of-age has no correlation with chronological age. The individual's physical development and, still more, his intellectual maturity are signs that lead his family to grant a kamalen' the rights that distinguish a man from a boy. The most important of these rights is assuredly that of taking a wife and founding a family.

As a matter of fact, the soli marks the point after which the young people of both sexes are deemed competent to contract
[582] marriages. Indeed, girls of 16 or 18 years of age and boys over 25 are rarely unmarried. It should further be understood that a girl may be betrothed at birth or even when she is being carried in the womb, as has been explained above.

● 429 Guardianship is intended to protect the individual from
562 the follies of inexperience and the natural weakness of the female sex, a weakness to be understood here to include not only actual lack of physical strength but also incompetence imposed by custom which forbids a woman any power whatever over community rights or property. This is why young men are subject to guardianship until the fa, in council, recognizes their right to exercise the prerogatives of man's estate. In principle, women are subject to guardianship throughout their lives.

429 During his married life, the father is the legal administrator of any properties coming to his minor children, and he usually employs such property with discretion since he is legally bound to render an account when the children reach their majority.

429 A person who is away for a long or indefinite period [217] delegates the direction of the family community for as long as necessary to a friend or relative. This substitute, however, is expected to act only in accordance with the customary counsel and the family of the absent person.

[586] In case of divorce, the children always remain with the father. A divorced woman again comes under the guardianship of her own community.

768 When the mother dies, the father retains the administration of her property which belongs jointly to her children. If, 429 however, one of her sons is married or of marriageable age and is competent, all such property is supposed to be handed over to him to administer in his capacity as fa of the uterine community.

When a father dies, his minor children are placed under the guardianship of the patriarch under whose authority the deceased was living. If he was independent, guardianship would be set up in accordance with his wishes which he would not have failed to make known.

In any event, if one of his sons is married or of marriageable age and sufficiently competent, he becomes fa of the familial community which gradually, as the younger sons grow up and establish families of their own, becomes a patriarchy such as we have described above.

[641] According to native law, deprivation of civil rights does not exist. In fact, however, persons who by reason of ill-health or senility are unable to comply with custom in carrying out their functions are supplanted by such persons as are designated by custom to replace them at the time of death.

596 Faya. The faya is the authority and power of the fa 614 over all his dependents. It has the same character, differing only in extent, whether it concerns a familial or a patriarchal community.

Familial faya. Within the family, the fa theoretically has complete authority over everything that constitutes this community. It makes little difference whether he acts on his own initiative or whether he allows himself to be swayed by the